



## 2012 San Juan Hotshot Season Report



The San Juan Hotshots are a national firefighting resource hosted by the San Juan National Forest in Durango, CO. We specialize in wildland fire suppression but also aid in disaster relief, multiple management incidents, and anything else where motivated and hardworking men and women are needed.



Sawmill Canyon Fire, Wyoming

## **2012 San Juan Hotshot Roster:**

Jay Godson-Superintendent  
Lance Martin-Assistant Superintendent  
Sean Wildhaber-Saw Boss  
Keith Bedonie-Squad Boss  
Jake Birdsell-Squad Boss  
Scott McCreary-Squad Boss (detailed July 15-October 5)  
Nate Christiansen-Lead Crewmember  
Jon Cordes-Lead Crewmember  
Scott De Velder-Lead Crewmember  
Ryan Corman-Crewmember  
Matt Rayes-Crewmember/EMT  
Roy Vega-Crewmember  
David Draayer-Crewmember  
Cole Inghram-Crewmember/EMT  
Andrea Drinkhouse-Crewmember  
Ross Schumaker-Crewmember  
Lew Sovocool-Crewmember  
Zach Freundlich-Crewmember  
Kodi Leslie-Crewmember/EMT  
Walter Chan-Crewmember  
Martha Schoppe-Crewmember/EMT



## Hiring

This year we saw some change in overhead and hired six new seasonals. Sean Wildhaber from the Bitterroot IHC was hired on as the Saw Boss, and Jon Cordes and Scott “Butters” De Velder were hired on early in the season as new permanent employees (Lead Crewmembers). Jon was assigned on the saw squad and Scott worked on a buggy on a dig squad. Jake Birdsell, after going to a fire in Texas, took a detail to Dolores, Colorado to work on qualifications for the season so that gave Scott McCreary an opportunity to detail as Squad Boss for the summer. With any injuries, sicknesses, or other personal needs we had over the summer, detailers from local districts helped out to keep us going strong. Our detailers were:

Theo Engel-120 days (Gunnison NF)  
Daniel Dyer-2 weeks (Mesa Verde Nat. Park)  
Kevin Linder-1 month (Dolores RD)  
Sarah Castaneda-1 month (Columbine RD)  
Matt Shethar-1 month (Dolores RD)  
Adam Treich-2 weeks (Dolores RD)  
Dave Hatamaki-1 week (Durango Helitack)  
Trevor Peterson-1 month (Columbine RD)



Gladiator Fire, Arizona



Roach Fire, Colorado

## Assignments

This season, SJIHC was assigned to incidents for a total of 116 days. Of those 116 days, 98 were spent on fires. We travelled a total of 18 days, and had 21 days off. With all the fire we saw, 1,100 overtime hours were worked. That's the busiest season San Juan has had since 2007. We fought fire in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Oregon. Direct line, indirect line, mile-long burnouts, burn prep, structure protection, mop up, snagging, building hose lays, building helispots, scouting, and initial attack were the typical assignments. In March, Keith Bedonie and Nate Christiansen spent two weeks on the Talladega National Forest in Alabama and burned a total of 11,000 acres. Late season for the crew was different than in previous years. Officially the crew was unavailable September 22, but with the remaining seasonal staff and several key leadership members a ten person module took a ten day assignment to the Gilead fire. Late season on the San Juan NF, fire season is continuing and the remaining permanent employees are helping to staff these fires with Incident Commanders, Overhead positions, and logistical support.



State Line Fire, Colorado



UTV Carpool, Wyoming

## 2012 Fire Assignments

| <i><b>Fire Name</b></i> | <i><b>Location</b></i> | <i><b># of working shifts</b></i> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Livermore Ranch         | Texas                  | 4                                 |
| Bear                    | Arizona                | 1                                 |
| Gladiator               | Arizona                | 8                                 |
| Pinon                   | New Mexico             | 3                                 |
| Little Sand             | Colorado               | 21                                |
| State Line              | Colorado/New Mexico    | 2                                 |
| Weber                   | Colorado               | 5                                 |
| Pine Ridge              | Colorado               | 2                                 |
| Arapaho                 | Wyoming                | 4                                 |
| Sawmill                 | Wyoming                | 3                                 |
| Myrtle                  | South Dakota           | 4                                 |
| Region 24 Complex       | Nebraska               | 5                                 |
| Sheep Park              | Wyoming                | 3                                 |
| Bud Love                | Wyoming                | 2                                 |
| Gilead*                 | Wyoming                | 12                                |
| Butte                   | Oregon                 | 4                                 |
| Roach                   | Colorado               | 4                                 |

\*multiple dispatches to incident



Little Sand, Colorado



Sleepy Hotshot

## Training

In order to train future leaders San Juan IHC provides on the job the experience for trainees and this year we did well. To stay current as an IHC we all participated in 80 hours of training to refresh the mind and body before we became available. Heavy physical and classroom training for two weeks helped us to prepare for the season. The Squad Leaders taught S-200 (Incident Commander) and L-280 (Followership to Leadership) to crewmember to invest in our future wildland fire leaders. Numerous taskbooks were completed: 1 DIVS, 1 TFLD, 1 HEQB, 1 ICT4, 1 CRWB, 2 FIRB, 4 FALB, and 1 FFT1.



Burnout on the Weber Fire, Colorado



## Vehicles

The SJIHC rolls with a supt truck, 2 crew carriers, and a chase truck, this year we added a UTV and trailer to the fleet. The Polaris Ranger was great logistically and for safety. It allowed us to scout line, carry equipment into the field, and be prepared for the “what if” situation. We had only one lost day for vehicle breakdowns. Our supt truck broke down in Silverthorne, CO with a cracked transfer case. That was only one of many breakdowns from the supt truck unfortunately. It had a mechanical issue in Grand Junction and outside South Park, CO. The crew carriers had just a few bugs this year (air conditioners, fan clutch, thermostat, alternator, and fuel injector). Our chase truck had a small issue with the drive shaft but ran strong for us. Overall, we drove a total of 16,500 miles per vehicle this year. That puts us about 2,000 miles above our average mileage per year.

## Safety

In total, five CA-1s were filed this year (1 Achilles tendon, 2 poison ivy exposures, 1 laceration, and 1 sprained ankle). Most of the season we stayed camp crud free with the exception of the early season trip to Texas and the Gilead Fire late season.

Keeping an open line of communication is very important to us in order to learn from mistakes we make and others make. At the end of each day we have an After Action Review so that the entire crew can give input on the day’s events and what we could do differently to make us safer and/or more efficient. At the beginning of each day we talk about different safety issues pertinent to the day’s assignment (weather, cutting, burnouts, steep terrain, dehydration, etc).



Little Sand Fire, Colorado

## Project Work

This year SJIHC was not as involved with project work as we typically are due to a busy fire season. Our projects this season were thinning ponderosa pine and prepping prescribed burn units on all three districts on the forest. This fall (in between fires) the remaining permanent staff have worked on BAER projects, Range projects, and hazard tree removal.

